



City of Seattle  
**Office of the Mayor**

Westwood/Roxhill neighborhood visit Q&A recap  
Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
Southwest Library  
9010 35<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
206-684-7455

1. **Speaker:** I appreciate your coming today. I'm the daughter of a police officer who died in the line of duty, and I'm offended by John T. Williams day, that 200 people could hold the city hostage like this. His family really attacked the Police Department's actions...I'd like to understand the rationale behind declaring an official John T. Williams Day.  
**Mayor:** I made a point in my State of the City address to emphasize the great work of our officers, because they are doing great work.
  - I sat down with Rick Williams (John T. William's brother), and I wouldn't conflate the actions of those trying to stir up trouble with the actions of his family; the family came to us at the City
  - I also want to express support for SPD's professionalism in a difficult situation
  - This issue will continue for some time since it was found to be an unjust shooting, and I expect there will be litigation down the road
2. **Speaker:** Why aren't you working with Council to get minority groups to take responsibility for their actions? I saw a video of Pete Holmes the other day talking about a Social Justice Initiative in the City; social justice picks winners and losers, and that's very disheartening to me.  
**Mayor:** We've done a lot of outreach to community groups about next steps, and it does become emotional
  - Regarding John T. Williams, it's not the minority groups marching and protesting, it's other groups
  - I support the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, and I think it's critical
  - We're starting by getting our own house in order:
    - What are the actions we take to take into account the history of institutional discrimination, and are we doing things to perpetuate it or keep it in place?
  - Most people in Seattle support equality, we don't have overt racism in the traditional sense, but we do have policies that have built up over time that advantage some groups over others
    - There's overwhelming data to support this; we need to ensure that we're not inadvertently perpetuating existing inequality
  - Employees who have been through the training overwhelmingly liked it and found it valuable; it helps with learning how to communicate with and relate to other groups**Speaker:** Thank you for that statement, but the thing that really upset me was when Pete Holmes said that our police department is systemically racist  
**Other speaker:** Do you think that?  
**Mayor:** I think most police officers, like most citizens, expect race and social justice
  - But I don't think our police department is different from any other institution
  - Just as in any other area, actions do have unintended consequences, and officers are no more immune from history, engrained stereotypes, etc. than anyone else, but when an officer comes into contact with someone the consequences are much more severe
  - I don't think our officers hold in their heart a desire to discriminate against anyone

3. **Speaker:** You have an obvious care for the common good, and I thank you for it...also, you look much younger in person.

**Mayor:** I've lost about 40 lbs.

**Speaker:** 2 big thoughts:

1. Thank you for your stance on the tunnel
2. We no longer need sound bites from the media, we need concrete education
  - There's a bias in coverage now...for example, on the Discovery Channel they used our viaduct video as an example of earthquake damage
  - We need experts to start educating people and providing the opposite view
  - When I watch the news here, everyone is pro-tunnel, but I've lived in Seattle for 45 years, and I'm not sure about spending all of this money when education and teachers need money
  - Also, if you live in West Seattle and you have to cross over to 99, all the lines are worn off; how come you can't keep the lines painted?
  - The billions of dollars for the tunnel, why can't it be used? I know it comes from a different pot...

**Mayor:** I'll try my best to answer your questions.

- I've been around for a long time as an advocate, and sometimes things only get reported in a certain way
  - That's one of the reasons I'm coming out to these forums, to reach people as many different ways as possible
- Your point about lines brings up a good point
  - There's a significant maintenance backlog on city streets
  - There's even an article about our Parks maintenance backlog in the paper today
  - There's a tendency to go for new projects vs. maintaining existing infrastructure
    - I proposed a commercial parking tax increase for local infrastructure needs; the Council approved an increase for Mercer West but not for the rest of the city
- As for the tunnel, they picked the most expensive, most risky option
  - I don't believe in rebuilding the viaduct; I think we should improve transit, surface streets, and I-5, and between those three things we can pick up all of the capacity of the viaduct
  - Not many people know this, but we just got back a report as part of the EIS, and the deep bore tunnel with tolls puts more cars on surface streets than any other option

4. **Speaker:** My sympathy at the loss of your father (to earlier speaker); I started the petition to get the West Seattle precinct built.

- Thank you, Darryl, for being at the Chief Sealth Club last Sunday
- I was also at City Hall the week prior, and I feel very strongly that when an officer acts the way this officer did, it hurts all of our police force & does SPD a great disservice
- I thank the Chief for having come to the Chief Sealth Club
- The October 22 group came to City Hall that day, stepped into the drumming circle, and a very silent people in this community threw them out
- These people [*Ed. note: Native Americans*] have been abused and misused in our culture
  - We have to have a semblance of social justice in this city
  - Thank you for standing up for that, and for having Darryl come to the Chief Sealth Club
- When Norm Stamper was the Chief, we had community policing
  - The difference between knowing people and driving down the street is huge
  - For 2 1/2 decades the woodcarvers sat there and hurt no one; if the officer knew John T. Williams there wouldn't have been a problem
- Community members want to know who officers are; please bring back community policing because that's what we need

**Mayor:** I agree, and so does the Chief, and we're working on it. The Chief has started Neighborhood Viewpoint Surveys that involve officers interviewing people in the community to build trust and relationships.

5. **Speaker:** Two questions:

1. By what month and what year will the City have an open 311 system in place where people can go online to get support and report broken infrastructure?
2. Would you instruct all department heads to voluntarily post all consultant contracts on their websites?

**Mayor:** It's an interesting idea; we'll go find out what the answer is on #2.

- Regarding 311, I'm not sure where we are yet
  - Greg Nickels proposed it, they ended up scaling it back
  - We did a minor thing last week—now instead of a common City caller id # you'll be able to see the actual caller id of the person calling
  - We're working on making our call center system simpler, too
  - 311 is on the list, but there's a lot of work that we have to do on the back end in order to get there
  - Fred Podesta, director of the Department of Fleets and Administrative Services, has been tasked with making our system more efficient
  - We're incrementally moving towards improving the efficiency of constituent interactions

6. **Speaker:** Last I heard, the City's position is that White Center is too expensive to be able to incorporate; you should pay attention to what's going on in their business district, though.

**Mayor:** I'm really torn by White Center.

- It's a great neighborhood, with a good business district, but to provide the same level of services there as we do in Seattle would be very expensive
- It's a very difficult issue to deal with
- I'm leaning towards "I don't know how we can afford it," but I recognize the value of it

**Speaker:** A few years from now it's going to look like a bargain, especially if Burien scoops it up

7. **Speaker:** I'm a Seattle firefighter, and I work at station 37; prior to that I was a firefighter in White Center.

- We have a really long response time in Arbor Heights right now, and that's historically been a problem
- Currently White Center's fire station has a straight shot into Arbor Heights, and they need a ladder truck, which we have...in this case, there's a solution waiting

**Mayor:** I've heard the issue before, we are looking at it

8. **Speaker:** The article about parks today interested me.

- We have lots of good pocket parks
  - For example, Smith Cove Park—the community takes care of it entirely, the City doesn't spend a dime
  - Enforcement of parking regulations within the park, monitoring of the cars, would help with freeing up parking space
- Talking about painting lines on the street, the Fauntleroy ferry line is disrespectful of the neighborhood, re: noise, filling up bus stops, and people parking in front of driveways
  - I'd love to see the lines get painted better, and disciplining cars by sending them to the back of the line instead of via tickets

**Mayor:** Jim, do you have any insights on this?

**Jim Curtin (SDOT):**

- The new idling laws just came in a few years ago
- We can take a look at the configuration of the existing lines to ensure that driveways aren't being blocked
- We're also looking at encouraging people to paint 5 feet from the edge of their driveway to mark where not to park

**Mayor:** We'll find out what we do now regarding parking enforcement in the parks currently & get back to you...you're worried that they're using them as park & rides?

**Speaker:** Yes...also, talking on cell phones while driving is an issue

**Mayor:** It is—lots of people are doing it now

**Christine Alar (SDOT):** I've worked closely with King County Metro—they're making some improvements to the ferry terminal, the bus stops will be changed and re-striped, and markings will be generally improved

**Speaker** (to SDOT staff): Thank you—you've been attending community meetings regularly, you've been great at getting out information.

9. **Speaker:** I don't know how old the police department is, but lots of issues recently have been with younger officers. Can there be more mentoring of younger officers by older officers?

**Mayor:** Chief Diaz is looking at that as well, and at the more active role of the sergeants in working directly with the officers to create a stronger mentoring relationship.

10. **Speaker:** I have a question about transit—I just started a contract with Microsoft, and while driving takes an hour, transit takes an hour and a half.

- Do you have any leverage to ask Metro to re-evaluate their routes?
  - All routes go through downtown currently, they don't connect to light rail

**Mayor:** I have some leverage, but Metro is a County agency, and it has a pretty strong culture of its own.

- I think Dow's figuring out how to have influence over Metro as well
  - I say that nicely—I'm doing the same thing at the City
- Part of our Transit Master Plan, and Dow has made clear his commitment to have Metro engaged, is to improve neighborhood-to-neighborhood trips
  - Only 17% of trips currently are to or from downtown

**Christine Alar (SDOT):** I work closely with Metro, and we're working on Rapid Ride now.

- As part of that, Metro King County will be holding public meetings in the Fall of this year to talk about potential connector services to connect to Rapid Ride service or just to better serve riders
- Check the King County website

**Speaker:** That sounds great, but I just read that the funding for the Rapid Ride line may be cut.

**Mayor:** That's federal funding.

**Speaker:** True, but it shouldn't be that hard to make the existing routes more efficient.

**Mayor:** The current route system is very complex.

- The current budget situation actually does present an opportunity to consolidate and make the network more efficient
- Also, at the state house, they're not giving money to any transportation agencies so that they can try to build support for new highway funding
- For the last 40-50 years, the amount of driving that we've been doing has been increasing, but in the last 10 years we've seen driving peak and start to decline
- Transit use is up, walking is up, bike riding is up
- One analogy is back when we were looking at nuclear power plants, energy use was growing...but as it turns out, we've met electricity demands through conservation and efficiency
- We've also seen economic growth with declining overall energy use, and that's likely what we'll see re: driving and fossil fuel use in the future
- We need to adapt to what people are already doing, which is driving less and looking for alternatives
- Many elected leaders are way behind that curve

11. **Speaker:** I'm here representing Roxhill Elementary, and I want to give the City—specifically SDOT and the Department of Neighborhoods—a pat on the back for figuring out how to bring community members into the school to figure out how to solve the schools' problems

- The school will be holding an auction later this year
- Please attend the PTA meetings—there's one coming up on Tuesday [3/15]
- Please don't forget that the school's making huge strides, even as a Title I school

**Mayor:** Thank you for your work.

12. **Speaker:** Thank you very much for coming out to our community; I know a lot of the feedback's not fun to hear, and it takes a special person to get out from underneath and hear it.

- I've been a block watch captain for 10 years, and my father in Oklahoma has been a board member for 30 years with an organization called Crimestoppers
- I'm passionate about those organizations, especially regarding providing free services
- I'm concerned about the message you sent with John T. Williams Day, too, and I'm concerned about the long-term damage from attrition
  - There are already officers who want to leave
- I'd like to make an appeal: whatever you can do as a manager to foster positive PR within the force would be appreciated

**Mayor:** I share your concern about officer morale and commitment to their community.

- I have multiple constituencies:
  - Officers are one, SDOT and DON folks are others, they work for me
  - I work for all of you
- How do I respond to both constituencies, people in the community and officers who work for me?
  - So often the feedback is "something needs to be fixed"; that's one reason why I highlighted the positive actions of officers in the State of the City address
  - I also try to get out to meet and talk to my employees in the same way
    - SPD is more difficult to do that with
  - I meet with all my department heads every 2 weeks, in between weeks we have smaller subcabinet meetings, and I try to go to department retreats, all-staff meetings, etc
    - SPD is more challenging—because of their shift structure, it's rare to have a large group of officers all together at once
- I'm concerned that the recent issues paint with too broad a brush
- Thanks for your work as a block watch captain

13. **Speaker:** SPD came up most often here.

- Someone referenced community policing
  - Does the community police academy still exist? It's a great way to build community-police relations
  - It educates, builds face-to-face recognition
  - Most attendees were around our age, there need to be younger people who participate as well

**Mayor:** I've spoken with the Chief about the need to get younger people involved with officers; it makes a difference. The Community Police Academy is still around. [Ed. note: see [here](#) for its program page]